

U.S. OVERSEAS RADIO STIRS DISPUTE AGAIN

Senators Write Carter Protesting
Way Vacancies on Oversight
Board Are Being Handled

By A. O. SULZBERGER Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 14 — Senior members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have written to President Carter to protest how the Administration is handling the filling of a majority of positions on the Board for International Broadcasting. They said they felt the board's independence might be jeopardized.

The five-member board, which oversees Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, was created by Congress in 1973 after the Central Intelligence Agency was shown to be behind the two Munich-based stations. Two seats on the board are now vacant and in a week a third will be open.

Actions by members of the National Security Council have raised fears that former intelligence officials are trying to redirect the board away from its oversight role to one more compatible with the two station's old role as a tool for propaganda.

In a letter, the Senators said: "At this juncture, it is of the highest importance to the future of the RFE/RL that continuity be maintained in the membership of the board. We have been disturbed by reports of attempted interference in the board's work by former C.I.A. officials inside and outside the Administration."

The letter, dated May 5, was signed by Senators Frank Church of Idaho, chairman of the committee, Jacob K. Javits of New York, its ranking Republican, Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, and Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois.

2 Men Approached About Seats

"I have the feeling," an Administration official said, "that some of the old-time C.I.A. types don't feel the board has been doing the right job with the radios. They want to mold the successor."

Paul B. Henze, the National Security Council specialist on United States propaganda and a former C.I.A. station chief in Turkey, has approached two men about filling seats. They are Paul Seabury, a professor of Political Science for the Uni-

versity of California at Berkeley, and Leo Cherne, president of the International Rescue Committee in New York, which reportedly received \$15,000 in C.I.A. money in the mid-1960's. Mr. Cherne was on the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under President Gerald R. Ford.

The Senators' letter said: "We believe that the work of a decade in assuring the professional integrity of RFE/RL would be undone if any of the present members of the BIB were to be replaced by persons who could even be remotely identified as presently or formerly associated with the C.I.A. or intelligence activities in any capacity."

The White House would not comment beyond saying that recommendations were being prepared for President Carter. The National Security Council is a coordinating body that takes information gathered from various sources, including the C.I.A., and presents policy options to the President.

Professor Seabury and Mr. Cherne said by phone that they also had talked with Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's national security adviser, about the jobs. Both men said they believed the matter was in limbo.

Candidate Criticizes Effort

"These bizarre efforts to identify me with the C.I.A.," said Mr. Cherne, "are damaging to an organization that is breaking its neck in seeking funds for refugees," speaking of the rescue committee. He said he first accepted the offer and later declined.

"I think it's reasonably clear to those involved they are not going to pursue it now," he said.

The debate over the appointments mirrors in many respects an earlier dispute in which Mr. Brzezinski recommended Prof. William E. Griffith of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a seat on the board. State Department officials and members of Congress fought his appointment successfully because he had been the chief political adviser at Radio Free Europe when it was run by the C.I.A.

Those opposing the appointments effort see it as an attempt to make the board more responsive to the National Security Council. "I doubt they'll get it," said one official.

The three departing members are the chairman, John A. Gronouski, and Rita E. Hauser and Frank Marcoe Jr.

In the past few years the board, which has oversight responsibility for the two stations, has been at odds with the stations over several issues, including the possible transfer of 50 to 60 personnel from Munich to Washington.

"There are close ties between the N.S.C. and the radio people," said one Senate staff member. "They go to Henze with their problems. The two radios have never liked even the light hand of the Board for International Broadcasting."

STAT